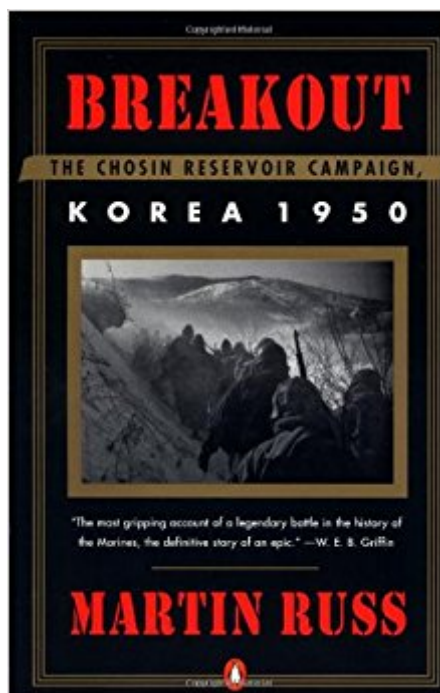


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# Breakout: The Chosin Reservoir Campaign, Korea 1950



## Synopsis

On General Douglas MacArthur's orders, a force of 12,000 U.S. Marines were marching north to the Yalu river in late November 1950. These three regiments of the 1st Marine Division--strung out along eighty miles of a narrow mountain road--soon found themselves completely surrounded by 60,000 Chinese soldiers. Despite being given up for lost by the military brass, the 1st Marine Division fought its way out of the frozen mountains, miraculously taking their dead and wounded with them as they ran the gauntlet of unceasing Chinese attacks. This is the gripping story that Martin Russ tells in his extraordinary book. Breakout is an unforgettable portrayal of the terror and courage of men as they face sudden death, making the bloody battles of the Korean hills and valleys come alive as they never have before. Of interest will be the new PBS American Experience Documentary "The Battle of Chosin", which premiered on November 1, 2016.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Martin Russ's controversial book Breakout: The Chosin Reservoir Campaign, Korea 1950 tells the riveting story of how 12,000 Army personnel and Marines fought their way out of an encirclement by more than 60,000 Chinese soldiers. A Marine wounded in combat during the Korean War, Russ writes with a passion for the men who endured freezing temperatures and scaled treacherous mountains while continuing to strike the enemy as they advanced toward safety. While many accounts of modern war bog readers down in a morass of military and administrative details, Russ's history so clearly distinguishes the various units, locations, and personalities that shaped the campaign that it could easily be compared with the finest novels of battle, including Michael

Shaara's *The Killer Angels*. Expertly moving between American, Chinese, and Korean points of view, Russ argues that the Marines were trapped at Chosin because of the arrogance of Douglas MacArthur, the incompetence of the U.S. Army, and the disciplined planning of the Chinese generals. Celebrated for his brilliant war memoir, *The Last Parallel*, Russ has provoked criticism for his tendency in *Breakout* to disparage the U.S. Army. However, his quotations of numerous dispatches showing Marine commanders' concern about advancing into the Chosin area, as well as his consistent portrayal of Army officers' ineptitude, lend credence to his argument that it was the particular esprit de corps of the Marines that prevented the disintegration of American forces in the freezing wastes of North Korea. --James Highfill --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In the annals of American heroic stands against long odds, Chosin Reservoir stands with the Alamo and Bataan with the bonus of a happy ending. Russ (*The Last Parallel*) has written the definitive account of the 1st Marine Division's epic breakout from the Chosin Reservoir in the winter of 1950. Outnumbered, unsupported and isolated in the depths of winter, 12,000 Marines, surrounded by 60,000 Chinese soldiers, cut their way out of encirclement and fought a path to the sea, bringing out most of their wounded and many of their dead with them. Small wonder, then, that Chosin Reservoir is celebrated as a victory by the Corps. Russ weaves the Marines' stories into a compelling tapestry of understated heroism, showing how the 1st Marine Division owed much to officers and senior NCOs with combat experience in WWII and the force of character to lead teenage riflemen from the front. Cohesion, as well as courage and tactical skill, brought the Marines out of Chosin. Time and again, those whom Russ interviewed stress the overriding importance of not letting down other Marines, no matter the cost. Russ relies heavily and appropriately on the accounts of Marines who fought at Chosin. The result is that there is a lot of detail, a lot of close-up recollections of localized battle, but Russ does an admirable job, when necessary, of panning back to give readers a picture of the whole campaign. Major ad/promo; author tour. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is an excellent history of the terrible Chosin Reservoir experience suffered by ground forces of the United States Marine Corps and the U.S. Army. Two things, first, I am glad that I was unaware of the sorry performance exhibited by the U.S. Army and its leadership when I enlisted in the army in 1956, and second, I am ashamed of the way the U.S. Army failed to pull their weight in the Chosin Reservoir campaign. Does anyone know if they are better trained and more courageous

now (1965 - 2017)? Anyway, this is a great book, with a well documented story of brave men who suffered much more than they should have had to. A story of brave men (U.S.M.C.), well trained (U.S.M.C.), well led (U.S.M.C.), and good men who loved and cared for one another (U.S.M.C.), a story that should never be forgotten.

Extremely well written. Puts one right there. The Korean War is not covered well in our "taught" history. My father did not speak much of his time in Korea during the war, so I've been reading up on that conflict. A must read for anyone that wants to know more about that time in history.

First of all, I will review the edition. Like any Penguin Classic it is sturdy and holds up well, despite being a paperback. My first order came with a badly bent cover but replaced it free of charge. Mr. Russ's story reads like an epic, except an epic where every occurrence is hard historical fact. Most non-fiction books are an incredibly difficult read, listing endless troop numbers and regiment labels until the most incredible events of human history are mind-numbingly dull. Mr. Russ manages to avoid most of this by telling the story through the eyes of the men who lived it. After first explaining the battle officially, he switches to an interview of a soldier describing what his experience was in the line of duty. It is one thing to read that several thousand Chinese soldiers attacked the Marine entrenchments, it is quite another to read a Marine tell his harrowing experience of having a seemingly endless enemy charge at him in the middle of the night. I was not very familiar with the Korean War before reading this book, and it does not cover the entire war either. However, it does provide enough information to understand the larger situation, so you may realize how hopeless the Chosin campaign seemed to the world at the time. It is definitely an excellent source about the campaign, and the author sources several more academic histories if you are interested in learning more. My only complaint was that Mr. Russ had a very obvious bias against the US Army. Although their performance was poor, and the Marines despised them, there are several times throughout the book when you may notice a very strong dislike from the author. That being said, these moments are few, and overall I consider this to be an excellent book both for its storytelling and its history.

I enjoyed the first person descriptions of the action because they added humanistic realism. The narrative was clear and well organized making the book easy to understand. The only negative criticism I have of the book is that all Marines are heroes, afraid of nothing. What makes a soldier a hero is mustering the will to move forward toward the enemy when you know there is a good chance you might die a painful death or be horribly maimed. I would have liked to read the account of those

Marines too. At least one or two those fearless Marines must have had their stomachs twisted in knots. Overall though it was a supremely heroic effort by the Marines, one to be very proud of. An orderly retreat when being attacked by the enemy at the same time is among the most difficult maneuvers.

OK, so you think you have it tough? read about these Marines! you will be cold, tired, hungry, sad, dirty, and amazed when you're finished reading this book. you will have a new respect for what many many went through in this forgotten war; both civilian and military, American and non-American. these are largely first-hand accounts by Marines, soldiers, and airmen that were present for the Chosin Reservoir Campaign of 1950. the brutal truth of day-to-day living for these men could nearly be measured in two frames; daytime and nighttime. during the day, if you weren't killed by an enemy sniper or didn't freeze to death, you would attempt to keep warm around a fire or catch up on sleep that you didn't get at night, or maybe even eat. at night, like clockwork at 2am, the enemy bugles and horns would sound off and as many as 500 to 1,000 enemy would rush the lines in waves, forcing you to defend yourself with frozen equipment that would jam up. many of your friends would be killed before your eyes, and the odds were that you yourself would be killed or wounded in one or many of the following ways: a.) an enemy grenade going off next to your head, b.) enemy burp gun fire that would spray your direction constantly, c.) the butt of a an enemy rifle upside your head, d.) friendly fire, or possibly e.) getting wounded by one of the above, falling back into your foxhole, and praying that someone could help you before you freeze to death. if you don't already have an enormous amount of respect for the armed services of the USA, you surely will after reading this astounding piece of history.

Good description of the Korea Marines action...

As a Marine Corps combat veteran and an author of four books about Marines in battle myself, I yield to the vastly superior storytelling of Maritin Russ in this gripping account of the 1st Marine Division's breakout from the Chosin Reservoir in 1950. i rank this book in the top five percent of the best war stories ever told. Russ, who is also a Marine Corps combat veteran, takes us down to the individual Marine level, while at the same time framing the story in the overall struggle of the 1st Marine Division as it fought its way to freedom through a vastly superior Chinese communist force. Recommended for anyone who is interested in men in battle.

Needs better pictures of the major events such as the trestle bridge installation and the railroad trestle removal etc.

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